

# NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

**United States Congress**

**Massachusetts Seventh District**

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## **MARKEY, SHAYS CALL FOR TRACKING OF MATERIALS AND EQUIPMENT USED TO MAKE BIOWEAPONS**

**Washington DC**—Representative Edward J. Markey (D-MA), a senior Democrat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee and the Select Committee on Homeland Security and Representative Christopher Shays (R-CT), a senior Republican on the Government Reform and Select Committee on Homeland Security, today released a letter to the Health and Human Services Secretary Tommy Thompson, Attorney General John Ashcroft, Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge, and National Security Adviser Dr. Condoleezza Rice regarding action that the Bush Administration has taken to limit the proliferation of biological and chemical weapons.

“Biological and chemical weapons can be developed with much more ease and much less equipment than nuclear weapons,” Rep. Markey said. “That makes the production of these weapons much harder to trace and the weapons themselves much harder to track. Instead of focusing on the final product, we should be focusing on the source material and technology used to develop these weapons. To do that, we need a better system to monitor that equipment and supplies.”

Many of the technologies and materials used in developing and manufacturing biological weapons have both civilian and military purposes. This makes tracking biological weapons production much more difficult than tracking nuclear weapons activities, as nuclear weapons require extensive infrastructure. Reps. Markey and Shays propose monitoring these weapons precursors, to decrease the need to detect and monitor the final product.

A first step in decreasing access to biological weapons would be for all countries to respond to President Bush’s November 2001 call for nations to strengthen constraints on access to and the creation of biological weapons by enacting legislation to penalize the misuse of biology and the preparation of biological weapons. While 146 countries have ratified the Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), many, including Egypt and Syria, have not. A condition for ratification is the passage of domestic legislation banning the development or production of biological weapons.

Rep. Markey’s letter asks what steps each department is taking to implement the President’s proposal to strengthen the BWC and what is being done to prepare for the upcoming annual meeting on the BWC.

“Biological weapons are a threat to global peace and security and we urge the President to work with other countries to prevent access to these destructive weapons,” concluded Rep. Markey.

Copies of this and all other correspondence can be found at <http://www.house.gov/markey/>.

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